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Interview with a Bad River Tribal Member

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Interview with Rae Ann Maday, Tribal member, Watershed Coordinator

By Tracey Ledder, Water Resources Office, Bad River Natural Resources Department

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Rae Ann, as a Bad River Tribal member, stated the following in regards to water resource use on the Bad River Reservation;

She consumes an average of one meal of fish per week (no stated size of meal) during spring and summer. She spears walleye herself during the spring in the Ceded Territory and may receive gifts of walleye and salmon from the Reservation during the summer. She generally prepares a large meal and may eat fish three days in a row then not have fish for another two or three weeks. In winter she eats less fish, mostly gifts from other Tribal members. Walleye and other fish are also served year round at community gatherings, feasts and ceremonies.

Rae Ann eats a meal with wild rice several times a week year round. She harvests this rice herself from the Reservation. Wild rice is also served at birthdays, funerals, ceremonies, weddings, potlucks, seasonal feasts, sweat lodges and the annual Pow Wow. Midewin ceremonies, a grand medicine society living the traditional way of life, serve wild rice twice a day during their four-day gatherings held each season. Several books have been written on the midewin way of life.

Ceremonies such as seasonal feasts and water ceremonies are held to thank the Creator and spirits of plants for the gifts that they give to the people and to pray for continuance of the cycle of life. Water ceremonies involve wading in the water. Other ceremonies may involve ingestion of water. Sweat lodges use water to pour over the hot rocks and the hot steam permeates the willow lodge and its occupants. Ceremonial and medicinal use of several riparian plants, including willow and cedar, is part of the traditional way of life. For example, the juices of the riparian/wetland Spotted Touch-Me-Not are applied to the skin as a treatment for poison ivy. Cedar is brewed and used as a tea; it is also used as a skin wash.